New York State Smokers Quitline 1-888-609-6292

Facts About Secondhand Smoke

What is Secondhand Smoke?

- Secondhand smoke is a mixture of the smoke given off by the burning end of a cigarette, pipe, or cigar, and the smoke exhaled from the lungs of smokers.
- The mixture contains more than 4,000 substances. Some of which are known to cause cancer.
- Secondhand smoke has been classified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a known cause of lung cancer in humans (Group A Carcinogen)
- Secondhand smoke is known to cause lung cancer deaths in nonsmokers.
- Being around secondhand smoke causes irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat.
- Secondhand smoke also irritates the lungs. This can lead to coughing, excess phlegm, chest discomfort, and difficulty in breathing.



HOW DOES SECONDHAND SMOKE AFFECT CHILDREN?

- Infants and young children whose parents smoke are among the most seriously affected by exposure to secondhand smoke. This puts them at higher risk of infections such as colds, pneumonia and bronchitis.
- Children exposed to secondhand smoke are also more likely to have reduced lung function and symptoms of respiratory irritation like coughing, excess phlegm, and wheezing.
- Secondhand smoke can lead to a buildup of fluid in the middle ear. This is a serious problem and in many cases results in the child needing an operation to get better.
- Children with asthma are especially at risk. The EPA estimates that between 200,000 and 1,000,000 asthmatic children have their condition made worse by secondhand smoke.

Information was provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control

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SECONDHAND SMOKE IN YOUR HOME

We spend more time in our homes than anywhere else. So the thought of cancer-causing chemicals circulating throughout our houses and apartments can be quite unsettling. Yet, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, that is exactly what happens when someone lights a cigarette in your home.

Those most affected by secondhand smoke are children. Because their bodies are still developing, exposure to the poisons in secondhand smoke puts children in danger of severe respiratory diseases and can hinder the growth of their lungs. On top of that, the effects can last a lifetime.

Ventilation systems in homes cannot filter and circulate air well enough to eliminate secondhand smoke. Blowing smoke away from children, going into another room to smoke, or opening a window may help reduce children's exposure but will not protect them from the dangers of secondhand smoke.

BENEFITS OF A SMOKE-FREE HOME

The greatest benefit, of course, is that you will remove all the health risks associated with secondhand tobacco smoke. Plus:

- When your home is smoke-free, it will smell much better.
- Your food will taste better.
- You'll spend less time, energy, and money cleaning your curtains, walls, windows, and mirrors.
- Your insurance rates may be lower check with your insurance company.
- Even your pets will be happier. For example, secondhand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer in dogs.
- Again, if someone absolutely must smoke, ask that person to do so outside.

